



United States Mission to the OSCE

Response to the Special Coordinator of the Stability Pact, Erhard Busek

As delivered by Charge d'Affaires Douglas Davidson
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
May 20, 2004

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The United States would like to welcome Dr. Busek to the Permanent Council on this Austrian holiday morning, and to thank him for his comprehensive report.

In the interest of time and in the holiday spirit, I should like simply to focus my remarks on a few of the most important issues that Dr. Busek has highlighted for us today.

To begin, let me say that the United States supports the Stability Pact's efforts to facilitate durable solutions for the refugees and internally displaced persons remaining in Southeastern Europe. Providing real opportunities for returns, and other sustainable solutions for vulnerable returnee populations, is important for long-term stability and for the integration of this region into Europe. This we believe should be a priority for all authorities in the region.

We believe that unresolved refugee/IDP issues can constitute a long-term irritant between the governments and people of the region, undermining their ability to put behind them the legacy of ethnic conflicts and to integrate with Euro-Atlantic institutions. While there has been progress, there is still much work to be done, and the international community, including the OSCE's participating States, should continue to assist all refugees and displaced persons.

The United States welcomes the joint campaign launched this week by the Southeast Europe Cooperation Process to combat organized crime and corruption in southeast Europe, as well as the other ongoing efforts of the Stability Pact and its partners in this area.

Mr. Chairman, it has been one year since the Ohrid Balkan Border Security Conference was held. The Conference was a landmark event, and it began the process of building solid national and regional foundations of security based on human rights, economic freedom, the rule of law, and civilian control of the military.

The United States continues to support the Common Platform and the Way Forward Document as a comprehensive blueprint for cooperation on border management and security in Southeastern Europe. We welcome the progress that has been achieved thus far, particularly as regards the development of the OSCE's "South East Europe Regional Cross-border Cooperation Program."

In light of the appointment of Stability Pact Anti-Trafficking Coordinator Helga Konrad to the post of OSCE Special Representative on Combating Trafficking in Human Beings, and in order to avoid duplication, we believe it would be appropriate to review ongoing Stability Pact involvement now in anti-trafficking matters.

In conclusion, let me apologize for the perhaps choppiness of my remarks this morning and to thank Dr. Busek once again for appearing here today. We wish him every success in his important work.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.